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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [ZI](#) [SF](#) [MO](#)
SUBJECT: GOM REACHES OUT TO ZIMBABWE OPPOSITION

Classified By: (S) Classified by Political Counselor Craig Karp
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (S) Summary: A senior Moroccan Ministry of Foreign Affairs official told us the Government of Morocco (GOM) has quietly reached out to the Zimbabwe opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai. On May 16, the Director for African Affairs Abdellatif Bendahane (strictly protect) told us the Minister of Foreign Affairs approved Morocco,s extension of support to the Zimbabwean opposition party. On May 10, the Moroccan Charge d,Affaires in South Africa met with Tsvangirai and offered Moroccan political support to him and the Movement for Democratic Change. Tsvangirai criticized South Africa, welcomed Moroccan support and asked for money. The GOM is considering this, though not officially. This reflects the long-standing GOM animosity to Robert Mugabe and South Africa over their support of the POLISARIO. End summary.

Morocco Decides to Reach Out

12. (S) On May 16, the Director of African Affairs in the Moroccan Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Abdellatif Bendahane (strictly protect) told Polcouns the GOM had approved his recommendation and decided to open communications with Morgan Tsvangirai, the leader of the Zimbabwe opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC).

Message from King Mohammed VI delivered to Tsvangirai

14. (S) On May 10, the Moroccan Charge d,Affaires in Pretoria, traveled to Johannesburg, South Africa to meet with Tsvangirai where he delivered a message of solidarity. He conveyed, "...the total and solid support of the government of His Majesty, the King of Morocco to the people of Zimbabwe and regret the bad turn of events that have taken place since the recent elections in Zimbabwe."

Tsvangirai Expresses MDC,s Position

15. (S) Responding to the GOM,s message, Tsvangirai told the Moroccan Charge he appreciated the GOM support. He said he had chosen self-imposed exile in South Africa in order to make contacts with governments friendly to the MDC,s cause. Tsvangirai regretted having to use Johannesburg as a base of operations as the South African government, headed by Thabo Mbeki, remains too close to Robert Mugabe,s government in Zimbabwe. Tsvangirai also expressed displeasure with the African Union and other African Leaders as they continue to stand by Mugabe.

16. (S) Through the Charge, Tsvangirai advised that the MDC would be willing to participate in another round of elections, knowing they would easily win. However, the MDC would not be willing to enter into a coalition government with Mugabe,s ruling Zimbabwe African National Union-Popular Front (ZANU-PF) as the ZANU-PF has lost its legitimacy with the MDC and the Zimbabwean people.

Tsvangirai,s request for help

17. (S) Tsvangirai told the Moroccan Charge he will launch a campaign to return to Zimbabwe and will need a total of five million U.S. Dollars to successfully fund his operations. Tsvangirai related he already had half of the money necessary but would need an additional two and a half million dollars to be fully funded. Further, Tsvangirai related to the Charge that getting money was difficult and he would appreciate any assistance Morocco could give.

18. (S) Comment. Bendahane recalled that Relations between Morocco and both Zimbabwe and South Africa have been strained from the recognition of the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic. Recently, the new South African Charge had come to his office to protest the Moroccan Charge in Pretoria circulating a diplomatic note regarding the transfer of the African Association of Mayors Headquarters from Johannesburg to Rabat. Bendahane said he used the meeting to vigorously protest the statement of the South African Ambassador to the United Nations, who during a recent United Nations Security Counsel debate on Western Sahara, compared the Israeli treatment of Palestine to the Moroccan presence in the Sahara. Per Bendahane's request we briefed counterparts at the British Embassy. End Comment.

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